

PLEASE NOTE: ALL defense documentation must be submitted to the IMS office a **MINIMUM** of six (6) working weeks prior to the first possible examination date. Please visit [defense scheduling](#) for more details.

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ELIGIBILITY TO DEFEND

Students are advised to use the [Master of Science Program - Requirements for completion checklist](#) to ensure they are eligible to proceed to defense.

In addition to the requirements listed in the [Master of Science Program - Requirements for completion checklist](#), the MSc candidate must:

- Be knowledgeable in his/her specific field;
- Produce a thesis that is roughly the equivalent of one full research manuscript in a peer-reviewed scientific journal and that meets IMS thesis standards as set-out in these guidelines (see [The Thesis](#)). Publication is encouraged.
- Check that you have been credited for MSC1010Y on your academic history on ROSI. Course completion is indicated by a CR on the academic history/transcript.
- Check on [ROSI](#) to make sure you have been correctly enrolled and credited for all your courses.

Students must meet all of these requirements prior to defending.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

The IMS Office requires ALL of the following documentation a MINIMUM of six (6) working weeks PRIOR to the first possible date of the MSc Oral Examination:

- Unbound paper copy of the thesis (will be reviewed by the Graduate Coordinators)
- Updated Student CV
- Completed [MSc Thesis Defense Nomination Form](#). All committee members must have agreed to be available on the listed potential examination date(s).
- Final PAC Report

Once the thesis has been approved by the IMS Graduate Coordinators, the IMS Thesis and Examination Officer will send out an official notification of exam e-mail, instructing the student to distribute a copy of the thesis to all examination committee members approximately 4 weeks before the MSc Oral examination. **DO NOT DISTRIBUTE YOUR THESIS TO YOUR COMMITTEE UNTIL RECEIVING E-MAIL CONFIRMATION FROM THE IMS.**

Upon receipt of all required documentation, the IMS office will approve the committee composition, appoint the examination Chair, organize the room and equipment, and officially inform all examiners (in writing) of the date, time, location and committee composition of the examination. The IMS office will also formally provide instructions for written appraisals to the internal and external appraisers. Finally, the IMS Office will collect the appraisals. At the MSc level, appraisals are not distributed to the student or committee in advance of the defense.

DEFENSE SCHEDULING

When settling on a defense date and time with your committee, please note the following scheduling limitations:

- The defense may start no earlier than 9am and no later than 3pm, Monday through Friday.
- The defense may only take place on days that the University is open. Please visit the [SGS sessional dates calendar](#) for holidays and university closures.
- In order to be eligible for the next round of convocation, students must defend a **MINIMUM** of one week prior to the final date for receipt of degree recommendations for their desired convocation cycle as listed in the [SGS sessional dates calendar](#). **Please note that SGS sessional dates vary from year to year.**
- The University is closed for approximately 2 weeks during the winter holidays. These 2 weeks do not count toward the minimum 6 working weeks' notice needed to schedule the defense.
- Defenses are not permitted one full week prior to the official University closure date for the winter holidays or in the first 3 business days after the university officially opens in January. Students and faculty will receive an e-mail MEMO at the end of September, notifying them of these dates. Dates vary by year.
- Allow yourself sufficient time after your defense to complete all proscribed changes to your thesis in time for degree recommendation deadlines. It is advised to hold your defense at least one month prior to the degree recommendation date for your desired convocation cycle (November or June).

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Make an appointment with an IMS Graduate Coordinator early in your degree if your student stipend is derived from a contract or your research project is associated with an industrial contract. Industrial support of research may limit the communication of research findings. This may affect your thesis and defense. The *Guidelines for Faculty of Medicine Graduate Students and Supervisors in the Context of Commercialization of Inventions based on Thesis-Related Research* is available [here](#).

FEES AND BURSARIES IN THE FINAL YEAR

The office of student accounts levies your student fees. For inquiries regarding your student fees please visit the [Student Accounts website](#) or call 416-978-2142.

MSc fees are levied on a semester basis. You are considered a registered student until you submit your final thesis post defense to the SGS online thesis repository. Once you have submitted your thesis online with the approval of your supervisor or modifications sub-committee, your fees for any upcoming sessions will be cancelled. Allow yourself enough time post defense to complete minor corrections or minor modifications as proscribed by your committee. Failure to complete corrections or modifications by the degree recommendation deadline will result in having to pay an additional semester's fees. Click [here](#) for information on exam procedures and corrections.

If you have exceeded the funded cohort for your program (2 years for the MSc degree), you may apply for a Master's Tuition Fee Bursary. This bursary is available to students beyond the funded cohort who still have a small amount of work outstanding, due to unanticipated factors that are beyond their control. Details for the Master's Tuition Fee Bursary are available on the SGS website [here](#).

TIMELINE RECOMMENDATIONS

A timeline for degree completion is available on the IMS website at: <http://www.ims.utoronto.ca/current/degree/timeline.htm>

In addition, writing up and defending your MSc thesis takes an AVERAGE of 5.5 months (3 months for writing up, 1 month for thesis proofing and review, and a minimum of 6 weeks for processing your defense package). To ensure timely completion, we recommend that students:

- Review the MSc defense guidelines thoroughly by the second PAC meeting or end of your first year in the program
- Discuss the process with the supervisor and PAC members as early as possible
- Send regular thesis drafts to the supervisor and PAC committee to review and set deadlines for return of comments. Allow one month for review of the final thesis draft
- Book all PAC meetings well in advance
- Use the [MSc Defense and Program Completion Checklist](#) provided in these guidelines
- Meet with a Graduate Coordinator if there are any concerns about the defense or thesis.

THE THESIS

The supervisor and program advisory committee are responsible for guiding the student about thesis content and research completion. The supervisor and committee should be prompt in reviewing, correcting, and editing thesis drafts. Make sure that your supervisor and program advisory committee review each part of your thesis as you write. This process will help you to make corrections and changes early and help you to maintain continuity throughout the writing process. Peer-reviewed publication is recommended.

The research content of an MSc thesis is roughly the equivalent of one full research manuscript in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. This varies by discipline. Some research consists of one large study (i.e. a clinical trial) that may result in one major publication; other research programs may generate the equivalent of several publications. You are expected to be knowledgeable in your specific field and also to have a general knowledge base. Thesis work will reflect an original contribution to new knowledge, and the candidate should have demonstrated an appropriate level of scholarship in his/her chosen field.

Before writing your thesis...

- Review SGS guidelines for the preparation and formatting of the thesis on the [Producing Your Thesis](#) section of the SGS website. Pay particular attention to the formatting, copyright instructions, and form requirements for electronic submission. Familiarize yourself with the requirements for electronic submission outlined in the [SGS Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Checklist](#).
- Consult previously completed theses in the IMS office or U of T library. You can view theses online at [Theses Canada](#) or [T-Space](#) the online thesis repository.

Electronic Thesis Preparation And Submission

All students must submit final versions of their thesis to SGS electronically. Although only the FINAL, APPROVED THESIS (after the MSc Oral Exam) is submitted electronically, students must prepare their thesis according to SGS directions for ultimate electronic submission.

Electronic theses and dissertation (ETD) instructions and templates are available through the SGS website [here](#). ETDs will normally be released 5-6 weeks after a student's convocation; release may be delayed for up to two years by submitting a [restrict thesis release form](#) to the IMS office. The form must be accompanied by rationale for why the student is requesting that the thesis release be restricted. Submit this form and rationale in writing to the IMS Thesis and Examination Officer (if applicable).

Full instructions on online submission are available on the SGS website [here](#).

For questions related to electronic submission, contact SGS at sgs.masters@utoronto.ca.

Contributions of Others to your Project...

Discuss this with your supervisor. Acknowledge others properly in the thesis, but be ready to defend work by others used in your thesis. Clearly state your own contribution in the thesis.

Research Included in MSc thesis...

Your MSc thesis should only be composed of work completed while enrolled in the MSc program. It must not include work completed in previous degrees or employment.

Multiple Publications Generated During Your Research...

If they are related to your main hypothesis, you may present them as separate chapters in the thesis. If they are not directly related to your main research, you may add it as an appendix in the thesis.

However, be ready to answer questions raised from such work. Two commonly used formats are:

- If the methods are similar, put them together, then present results as separate chapters
- If different methods are used, include only general information in the Methods chapter and present detailed methods in separate chapters

Which comes first: Publication of the research, or defense of the thesis?

Talk to your supervisor about this and come to an agreement early on in your program. Your supervisor has a vested interest in prompt publication. You have an interest in a timely degree completion. Meet with a Graduate Coordinator if there is disagreement over this.

To request an appointment with the Graduate Coordinators, contact 416-978-5012.

THESIS PREPARATION GUIDELINES

Format

Your thesis may be prepared in a continuous "traditional format", with in depth *Literature Review*, *Aims/Hypotheses*, detailed *Methods* section, data presented in a central *Results* section and a *Discussion* that describes the plausible range of interpretations for your work, followed by the

Conclusions and Future Directions. Alternatively, you may choose a "paper format". In this case, your thesis work is organized as a series of self-contained chapters (each containing a focused *Introduction, Methods, Results, Discussion/Conclusion*), similarly reformatted for consistency and framed by common in depth *Literature Review, Aims/Hypotheses, and General Discussion, Conclusions, and Future Directions* chapters. The decision as to which format to use is best made early in the writing process, in consultation with your supervisor. In general, the choice depends upon the stage you are at in the preparation of publications and whether your thesis is most readily viewed as one continuous work or a set of discrete, but related studies that together tell your story. Bring in your proposed *Table of Contents* and the Graduate Coordinators will be glad to look it over.

Abstract

The central hypothesis, rationale and research aims should be clearly and explicitly laid out, along with interpretation of the results for each component of your experimental work. State what you have found rather than "results will be discussed." Keep technical jargon and discussion of background to a minimum. Endeavour to explain the findings and their significance at a level that is understandable to someone working outside your field of interest. The limit for a master's thesis abstract is 150 words.

Acknowledgments

In this section you should acknowledge and thank family, friends or any other people who may have helped you along the way.

Contributions

Explicitly acknowledge the contributions of technicians, trainees, collaborators, faculty mentors and funding sources to the experimental work, analyses and writing of the thesis. Be precise, inclusive and accurate. A listing of the specific contributions of others is presented as a separate section immediately following *Acknowledgments*. Images, data and text taken, or adapted from material on the web, papers, or books, require attribution and cannot be used without permission from the copyright owner. Be sure to include formal letters of permission to incorporate any published materials in your thesis. More information on copyright issues and a template for preparing copyright letters of permission are available on the SGS website [here](#).

List of Abbreviations

All but universally accepted abbreviations, such as units of measure, should be listed and should be explained in the thesis text on the page where they are first used. For guidance on what abbreviations need not be listed, consult the Council of Science Editors Manual for Authors, Editors, and Publishers (available through the UofT Gerstein Library, or for purchase at <http://www.councilscienceeditors.org>), for the instructions to authors provided by respected journals in your discipline.

List of Figures and List of Tables

Figure titles should be short and self-explanatory. Leave details to the legends. All figures require a legend. Remember to include error bars. By skimming the figures and legends, a reviewer should get a clear sense of the results in your thesis.

Literature Review

The *Literature Review* is a scholarly review of the background to your research question. It frames your work with reference to the history of your research question, relevant theories and the clinical picture, if appropriate. Concepts and terminology that are used in your research should be explained and you should provide a review of technologies, approaches and analytical methods that you use. Where there are gaps in the literature that your thesis addresses, point these out and mention how your thesis work will resolve them. The relevant literature should all be covered in this first section so that the *Discussion* need not introduce new literature (unless it is extremely recent).

Research Aims and Hypotheses

Strive for clarity. Research aims frame the general over-riding purpose of the project. Hypotheses are testable postulates about the nature of relationships in your field of study. State hypotheses explicitly and summarize the arguments behind them. For most theses, specific research questions are a series of experimental steps you take to test the hypotheses. Make sure that research aims, hypotheses and specific research questions are clearly aligned. In qualitative research theses, aims, hypotheses and key issues of research design typically emerge only through engagement in the field of study. Differences between hypothesis-driven investigation and qualitative research can give rise to confusion, and particularly so when mixed method approaches are used. If in doubt, students should consult with the PAC for guidance on appropriate framing of the thesis research aims and structure, early in the writing process.

Methods

These should be described in sufficient detail as to allow someone else to reproduce your work. If a novel technique is described, this section should be quite extensive. If the thesis is prepared in a paper format, a consolidated *General Methods* section can be used to provide the necessary detail. Very fine detail (e.g. chemical recipes) can be placed in an *Appendix*.

Results

If you are preparing a paper format thesis, simply follow instructions to authors and norms common to respected journals in your field for each chapter of your experimental work. If you are using the traditional format, you may find that it useful to provide more interpretation of the results than you would in a shorter manuscript. This will help lead the reader through this extended section. Subheadings that indicate the "bottom line" for each set of related experiments are useful in the paper format and essential in a traditional *Results* section.

Discussion

A *General Discussion* is required in both traditional and paper format theses. In the paper format, discussion sections within individual chapters deal with results germane to experiments described in each chapter. In contrast, the *General Discussion* addresses the thesis as a whole. A bit of repetition is inevitable. However, the depth of analysis in this section goes beyond your specific experiments and findings. This section should address the broader issues raised by your work. In the *General Discussion*, you need to discuss how the discrete parts of your work fit together. Explicitly discuss the hypotheses, how your work has supported them and in what ways it has not. Were your aims realistic? If not, why not? What were the limitations of your approach? What has your work revealed that is novel? How is it novel? Does it conform or not to the literature in your field (the literature you have covered in your literature review)? In a traditional thesis, the single *Discussion* section covers both the interpretation of particular experimental results and these larger, contextual issues.

Conclusions

This section should clearly state the "bottom line" of your findings, including a reappraisal of your hypotheses in light of your findings - i.e., whether your work supported or refuted your original hypotheses. This section can also speculate on the implication of your findings.

Future Directions

This is the fun part of your thesis! Where would you take this research program, were you to continue in the field over the next 6 months, 2 years, or 10 years? What are the most important questions that emerge from your work and review of the field? How would you address them?

References

All references cited in the thesis and all published sources identified in the *Contributions* section must be listed. In general, cite primary sources whenever possible. If using a secondary source, make this clear (e.g. "reviewed in...."). You can use any one of the standard formats for references but be

consistent in its use. Double-check to ensure that references in the list are cited in the text and, conversely, that all citations in the text are listed in the *References* section. Missing citations or references are a red flag to reviewers.

THESIS FAQs

1. How long should my thesis be?

An MSc thesis is 100-120 pages, plus references. Theses that fall short of this will be scrutinized for sufficient review of the literature and reflection on future directions.

The thesis includes:

- Literature Review (**30** pages)
- Hypotheses and Research Aims (**2-5** pages)
- Experimental work equivalent in depth to what would typically be contained in **1-2** peer-reviewed papers
- General Discussion and Future Directions (**15-25** pages)

Consult with your supervisor and PAC to ensure that you have adequately covered the background to your question, your results and their significance to the field. You may also find it helpful to discuss your outline and thesis plans with one of the Graduate Coordinators.

2. English is not my native language. Does my thesis have to be written in perfect English?

The grammar and spelling in your thesis must be of high standard, just as they would need to be in articles submitted for publication. Please ask your supervisor and your committee to advise you on language adequacy. Do not fall into the trap of taking verbatim passages from published papers or textbooks because you think they are written in “better English” than you can produce.

The following University of Toronto resources are available to students to improve their academic writing and speaking skills:

[Office of English Language and Writing Support \(ELWS\)](#)

3. When does borrowing from the work of others become plagiarism?

Under The Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters, to plagiarize is to “... knowingly represent as one’s own any idea or expression of an idea or work of another” in an academic work. It is critical that the ideas and arguments of others be correctly attributed and simply paraphrasing these as your own does not suffice. A more extensive discussion of the subject is provided in the guide “[How Not to Plagiarize](#)” an excellent online resource prepared by Dr. Margaret Procter, U of T Coordinator, Writing Support.

4. Can I actually plagiarize my own work...!?

It may seem surprising, but reproducing your own published work without proper acknowledgement can be considered “self-plagiarism”. If you include such materials in your thesis, cite the published work and submit a letter of permission from the copyright holder, or a statement from the publisher (often available on journal websites) authorizing use of the material, when you deposit your thesis.

5. Where can I find guidance on what to include in my thesis, organization, and formatting?

Take a minute to peruse the PhD and MSc theses of previous IMS students in the IMS Thesis reference library. If available, look at the theses of students from your laboratory. The *Table of Contents* will give you an idea of thesis structure. Skimming through several theses will give you a sense of what content and arguments should be covered in each section of your own text. If you need further guidance, the Graduate Coordinators are available to meet with students in person. To book an appointment, contact Hazel Pollard at 416-978-5012.

FINAL PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC) APPROVAL FOR DEFENSE

A final committee meeting is held with a FULL PRACTICE ORAL EXAMINATION to prepare the student for defense. The final PAC meeting must include a 20-minute slide presentation by the student, and a question and answer period where committee members pose questions that would be typical of those asked during a final defense. Prior to the final PAC a final version of the thesis must have already been circulated for review. At the final PAC the supervisor and Program Advisory Committee must approve the written thesis for submission to the IMS.

At the end of the meeting, the committee votes on the student's readiness for defense and **SIGNS AND COMPLETES ALL PAGES OF THE PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE FORM, INCLUDING THE FINAL PAGE** indicating:

- **The committee has reviewed the thesis.** The student's final thesis draft has been read and proofed by all committee members. It is acceptable, in terms of content, quality of writing, and presentation. The thesis is ready for presentation at an MSc oral examination.
- **The committee has tested the student's presentation and oral defense.** The student's presentation of the thesis was well-organized, comprehensive and focused. The student's ability to field questions related to the background and significance of research, general knowledge, and specific issues related to the thesis has been appropriately tested.
- **The committee has tested the student's general and specific knowledge related to research.** The student has completed appropriate graduate courses for degree completion. The minimum degree requirements have been met. The student's basic scientific knowledge has been appropriately tested and is acceptable for thesis defense.

Please ensure all the boxes have been checked and all PAC members have signed the last page of the PAC report. If the PAC is unable to attest to the above three questions, then it will not be considered the final and an additional PAC must be held until the student is able to meet these requirements.

At the final PAC, the PAC members can help recommend eligible appraisers/examiners for the MSc Oral Exam. See [Members of the MSc Oral Examination committee](#) for eligibility criteria.

MEMBERS OF THE MSC ORAL EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Student and supervisor should discuss and agree on who should be on the examination committee (see below). ***The supervisor is responsible for contacting the examiners and confirming their willingness and availability to participate.***

The MSc Oral Examination committee should consist of 5 voting members, plus the Examination Chair. Minimum quorum is 4 voting members, 2 internal to the PAC and 2 external to the PAC.

The committee is composed of:

- **Supervisor**
- **2-3 Program Advisory Committee Members**
- **1 Internal Appraiser**
 - A member of the UofT graduate faculty with expertise in the field
 - Not affiliated with the student's research project nor collaborating with the supervisor in the past 6 years
 - Cannot be a member of the supervisor's primary ACADEMIC department. In the case of larger departments such as Dept. of Medicine, Surgery or Psychiatry, s/he should not be from the same DIVISION as the supervisor

- Full Members of the Graduate Faculty are preferred
- This examiner submits a written appraisal of the proposal at least one week prior to the Exam, and attends the defense. This written appraisal is NOT distributed to student and committee before the examination
- **1 Examiner,**
 - A member of the UofT graduate faculty with expertise in the field
 - Not affiliated with the student's research project nor collaborating with the supervisor in the past 6 years
- **1 External Appraiser**
 - A non-UofT expert in the candidate's field of research
 - Affiliated with another University, holding a professorial rank and eligible to supervise graduate students at that institution
 - Expected to be an objective reviewer - neither affiliated with the student's research project nor collaborated with the supervisor or student in the previous 6 years
 - The external appraiser will be required to submit a written appraisal of the thesis at least one week before the MSc Oral Examination. The External Appraiser is not required to attend the MSc Oral examination or vote. This written appraisal is NOT distributed to student and committee before the examination.
- **The Examination Chair (appointed by IMS Office)**
 - Runs the examination proceedings, "keeping the peace"
 - Represents the IMS and SGS administration and conducts the examination according to the rules of procedure
 - Ensures that all examiners needed to achieve voting quorum are present
 - Instructs those present as to their duties, instructs the supervisor to carefully document items for revision and modification
 - Discusses and finalizes the results, and reports the outcome to the IMS Office
 - DOES NOT need to review the thesis in advance and does not vote.

All examiners (except the External Appraiser) must be members of the University of Toronto Graduate Faculty, as an Associate Member, Full Member, or Member Emeritus. You can determine the graduate faculty status of a proposed examiner by checking with:

- (a) The examiner
- (b) The [SGS Faculty Listing](#)
- (c) The [IMS faculty database](#)

If in doubt, consult the IMS Office.

MSc ORAL EXAMINATION RULES OF PROCEDURE

Before the presentation

- The Exam Chair collects the Examination File from the IMS Office or by arrangement with the Thesis and Examination Officer.
- The Chair introduces the members and the candidate and ensures that all examiners are present. If members are missing, the Chair advises the IMS Office and discusses action to be taken. The examination will be cancelled if quorum is not met.
- The Chair instructs the supervisor of his/her responsibility to carefully document items for revision and modification (if necessary) during the examination.

- The Chair asks the student to leave the room.
- The Chair advises the examiners whether the student has completed degree course requirements and inquires whether there are any major concerns about the upcoming examination
- The Internal Appraiser presents his/her appraisal. Discussion may follow reading of the appraisal.
- The External Appraisal is read to the committee by the Exam Chair.
- The supervisor is provided with a copy of the appraisals.

Presentation by Candidate

- The student is invited back into the room to give a 20-minute (uninterrupted) presentation. This is a strict time limit. A PowerPoint presentation usually accompanies the presentation. Make sure you bring back-up in case of technical difficulties.

Question Period

At the examination, the supervisor should carefully document items for revision and modification.

- Following the presentation, questions are posed to the student. These are presented in two rounds, with 10 minutes allotted to each examiner per round.
- The Chair allows only one Examiner at a time to ask questions (discussion by Examiners among themselves will only detract from the 10 minute time period) and should intervene if another examiner, or the supervisor, starts to join in the discussion.
- Order of questions is usually: Internal Appraiser, Examiners, Committee Members, and supervisor.
- The Chair should keep informal notes about the content of questions that may lead to proposal revisions for reference during the analysis of defense.
- Following questioning, the student is again asked to leave the room.

Committee discusses the Examination and Votes

The Chair asks the following specific questions of the examiners. All the examiners must address the questions:

Is the written thesis acceptable?

- a) With no modifications
- b) With minor or organizational corrections (typos, change in format, additional information, no new data or new interpretation of data required) to be corrected within one month of the examination.
- c) With minor modifications (rewrite part of the proposal, addition of new experimental data and/or completely new interpretation of data). To be completed within 3 months of the examination.
- d) Not acceptable

Was the Oral Defense:

- a) Excellent
- b) Very good
- c) Acceptable
- d) Not acceptable

In the case that a consensus about the recommendations is not reached, the Chair must ask for a vote on each question. More than one negative vote (or abstention) causes the examination to be adjourned. The Chair does not vote. The committee also determines if the student should be recommended for an award and if s/he is suitable for entry into the PhD program.

If minor modifications are required, the Chair appoints a Modifications Subcommittee (see [After the MSc Oral Examination](#)).

The student is invited into the room and the Chair advises the student about the outcome of the examination.

A clear statement about who will review the revised thesis is given to student and supervisor and the defense is adjourned.

After the MSc Oral Examination

The Exam Chair returns the file to the IMS Office.

If minor or organization corrections are recommended...

- Student consults with supervisor and Program Advisory Committee members about changes
- Supervisor writes to IMS office to confirm completion of revisions within one month of the examination.

If minor modifications are recommended...

- Examination Chair will appoint a subcommittee
 - Includes the Internal Examiner and 2 Examiners
 - Subcommittee Chair cannot be the Supervisor
- Student consults with Subcommittee members about changes, revises thesis and submits it to the subcommittee.
- Subcommittee Chair writes to IMS office to confirm completion of revisions within three months of the examination.

A repeat MSc oral exam is absolutely required if:

- The student does not pass the oral defense/exam. This may occur when a vote is required (i.e., examiners disagree about the recommendations) and there is a negative outcome.
- The thesis requires very major modifications that must be defended.
- Corrections are not submitted within the required timeline (above)

The student is allowed only one repeat MSc Oral Examination.

EXAMINATION DAY TIPS

Before the exam:

- Check all audio/visual presentation equipment: computer, projector, overhead
- Briefly review your proposal, get familiar with your figures
- Get familiar with several key references, including authors' names, research groups and major points that may support your defense

On the day of the exam:

- There is no dress code, but it is recommended to dress in a professional manner
- Come approximately 30 minutes early to check the equipment
- Bring water and/or refreshments for your committee
- Bring your thesis

Presentation

- 20 minutes MAXIMUM (about 20 slides)
- Remember: everyone has read your thesis. You don't need to teach your Examiners.
 - Background: provide the rationale and significance of your research
 - Hypothesis: this is the most important part of your research
 - Method: concentrate on the experimental design
 - Results: only present the main results
 - Conclusion: be clear and accurate

Examination Questions

There are several types of examination questions, which fall into 4 categories:

- Related to your research: background, significance
- Questions from your thesis: statement, presentation of figures, additional information, your mistakes
- Background knowledge: statistics, etc
- Unpredictable questions
 - If the *Globe and Mail* wants to release your research, what would be the title of the article?
 - What are the top 3 secrets of your success?
 - If you were allowed to re-do your project, what kind of new approaches would you like to use?

How to answer your questions:

- Make sure you understand the question properly. Repeating the question back can allow you time to think it over
- Provide a clear, brief answer
- Use references to demonstrate your knowledge and support your point
- Don't be defensive
- Be honest. Sometimes, "I don't know" could be the best answer
- If the question is not related to your research directly, point it out first, then speculate
- After the first round, if you feel it is necessary, you may ask for a short break
The Chair has the obligation to protect the student. If you feel "harassed" you may bring this to the attention of the Exam Chair

SUBMISSION OF THE FINAL THESIS

The thesis is permanent evidence of your degree training. It is the culmination of your degree. Your degree is not an occupation, but a lifetime honor. Make sure that this enduring document is impeccable!

Please follow the instructions for electronic thesis submission on the SGS website [here](#).

If you wish to restrict the release date of your thesis, please submit the [Restrict Thesis Release Date form](#) to the IMS Office. Note that the IMS requires 1-2 weeks to obtain the necessary signatures.

Electronic upload of the thesis is a mandatory requirement to convocate. Students who do not follow the necessary procedures for electronic submission may be removed from the convocation list. For questions related to electronic submission or if you experience difficulty uploading your thesis, contact SGS at sgs.masters@utoronto.ca.

GRADUATION

Once the IMS office receives confirmation of corrections from the supervisor or sub-committee chair, we will complete and forward an MSc Degree Recommendation to SGS. SGS will calculate any balance of degree fees and inform the student directly. The student is responsible for ensuring that electronic thesis submission requirements have been met in order to graduate.

See information on graduation procedures on the SGS website, [Graduation and Convocation section](#).

Once this is complete, your fees for the next academic session will be cancelled on ROSI and you will be placed on the next available convocation cycle (November or June - unless otherwise requested). Please be patient during peak examination times such as September, October, December and January. It may take some time before SGS cancels your fees on ROSI.

SGS will notify you by e-mail to your UTmail+ address about convocation dates, gown rental, tickets etc. approximately 4 weeks prior to the convocation date. If you are forwarding your UTmail+ e-mails to

another e-mail address, please make sure to check your junk mail for convocation notifications.

For more information about convocation dates and tickets, contact the office of convocation directly at:
<http://www.convocation.utoronto.ca/home.htm>

MSc THESIS DEFENSE & PROGRAM COMPLETION CHECKLIST

In order to use this checklist, you will need to select a target final oral examination defense date and work backwards from there. Your timeline to completion may require modification to accommodate holidays.

Approximately six months prior to MSc defense date:

- Start writing thesis.
- Ensure that all degree requirements are met by following the [Master of Science Program - Requirements for completion checklist](#).
- Meet with IMS Graduate Coordinators if any complications arise.

Approximately 3 Months prior to final defense date:

- Select external appraiser and confirm that s/he agrees to provide an appraisal
- Complete thesis writing and revisions.
- Hold final PAC meeting for PAC approval to proceed to defense.
- Select MSc examination committee membership and determine potential examination date/time.

At least 6 working weeks prior to first possible defense date:

- Submit defense documentation package to the IMS Office. All forms must be complete, legible and accurate. Please ensure examiner e-mail addresses or contact phone numbers are correct and accurate. Incomplete forms will not be processed.

MSc ORAL EXAMINATION

After final defense date:

- Complete post-examination corrections or modification if applicable
- Supervisor or modifications sub-committee chair (whichever applies) must send a confirmation of completed corrections to pa.medscience@utoronto.ca
- Student must ensure that conditions for graduation (i.e. payment of fees) are met
- Upload thesis electronically to SGS

OPTIONAL: Provide a faux-leather hard-bound thesis to the IMS office for display in the IMS thesis library.

Convocation takes place in November, June or March (in absentia).

GENERAL FAQs

Why does the IMS require a 6 week lead time?

The examiners have to be vetted, a chair needs to be appointed, and examiners, particularly the internal and external appraisers, need enough time to thoroughly read the thesis. The most important reason is that the thesis has to be screened by the Graduate Coordinators. Very often, although the essential content has been approved by the PAC, the thesis does not conform to IMS standards in

terms of depth and breadth of literature review and discussion. In those cases, the thesis requires revision by the student, which can take up to two weeks before it can be sent out to examiners.

Can I invite members outside of my approved defense committee to my defense?

No. The MSc defense is available only to those members who have been listed on your nomination form and pre-approved by the IMS office.

Who is responsible for distributing the thesis to the committee?

Once the IMS has approved the thesis, we will send out a notification of exam by e-mail, instructing the student to distribute the thesis to all committee members. Students are expected to distribute the thesis as soon as they receive notice. If an examiner requests a hard-copy of the thesis mailed to them, we ask that the supervisor cover courier costs.

How should I deliver my thesis to my examiners?

Please deliver your thesis to your examiners either by pdf or hard-copy depending on their preference. If they request a hard-copy of the thesis, the supervisor is requested to cover courier costs for the student.

Does my external appraiser attend my defense?

At the MSc level, the external appraiser does not typically attend the defense. The IMS does not provide a travel stipend, and the external appraiser's report is sufficient to fulfilling their role, without them physically being present at the exam. In rare cases, if the external appraiser expresses willingness to attend the defense, they are permitted to do so.

I am planning on starting medical school immediately after my MSc, what should I keep in mind to transition from my MSc to Medical School?

Most Medical Schools demand degree completion BEFORE starting Medical School. Offers of admission are issued up to the start of Medical School classes. If you plan to start in the Fall you must defend by mid-June.

- Discuss the issue with your supervisor and Program Advisory Committee when you apply to medical school
- Meet with your committee often to ensure you all agree on a timeline for completion and work expectations
- Confirm with your medical school(s):
 - Does admission demand degree completion prior to entry?
 - If yes, what is their final deadline for submission of degree?
 - What is the final date when you'll hear about your acceptance?
- Get all research for your degree completed **WELL IN ADVANCE**
- Book your defense early. Defend your thesis by mid-June

MSc THESIS DEFENSE NOMINATION FORM

****Please note** ALL documentation MUST be submitted to the IMS office a minimum of six working weeks prior to the examination date.**

Student Name: _____ UofT Student #: _____

Valid UofT e-mail address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Examination Date: _____ Start Time (min. 3 hours): _____

Thesis Title: _____

Committee Composition (see [Members of the MSc Oral Examination Committee](#) for eligibility details)

Examiner	Name & SGS Appointment:	Mailing Address (if available)	Communications:
Supervisor	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
PAC Member # 1	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
PAC Member # 2	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
PAC Member # 3 (if applicable)	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
Internal Appraiser (writes appraisal & attends exam)	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
Examiner #1	Name: Dept:		Phone: Email:
EXTERNAL APPRAISER	Name: Dept: University:		Phone: Email:

Examination Chairs are provided by the IMS and do not need to be listed on this form.

PLEASE BE REMINDED:

- **No collaboration in the last 6 years may exist among supervisor, student, and Examiner, Internal Appraiser/External Appraiser.**
- **Students will be responsible for delivering the thesis to all examiners. Supervisors are requested to cover courier costs if hard-copies of the thesis are requested.**
- **It is the student's responsibility to confirm that all contact information on this form is correct and legible. The IMS will not be held responsible for any incorrect contact information.**

Audio-Visual Requirements (check off all required items):

LCD projector (please supply your own lap-top computer – MAC users, must supply their own LCD connector cable)

Teleconference Equipment (For MSB bookings only)

Student signature

Supervisor Signature

Date

Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Submission Checklist

For Master's and Doctoral Students

Before you submit your ETD, please read and complete the steps outlined below.

This checklist is designed to walk you through all the necessary steps for completing and submitting your ETD.

	If you had corrections to make, ensure that your supervisor has notified the SGS and your Graduate Unit that the corrections have been made and that the thesis is ready to submit.
	If you had minor modifications to make, ensure that the convener of your minor modifications subcommittee has notified the SGS and your Graduate Unit that the modifications have been made and that your thesis is ready to submit.
	Follow the SGS formatting guidelines.
	Convert your thesis to PDF.
	Submit a completed Library & Archives Canada license form to the SGS.
	Submit a completed "Restrict Release" form to the SGS, if applicable.
	Copy and paste the indicated copyright permissions to the thesis repository when submitting your thesis, if applicable.
	Submit your thesis to the U of T UMI Thesis Submission site with the proper file naming convention, e.g. Doe_John_201411_PhD_thesis.pdf (201411 is for November convocation. March grads should use 201403; June grads should use 201406)
	Submit a bound paper copy to your Graduate Unit, if required. The U of T binding service is recommended: http://bookpod.uoftbookstore.com/thesis-binding.php You will be invited to order bound copies through the Proquest thesis submission interface, but the U of T service is faster and less expensive.
	Keep your contact information up-to-date in ROSI.
	About five to six weeks following convocation, look for your thesis in T-Space and on the web!